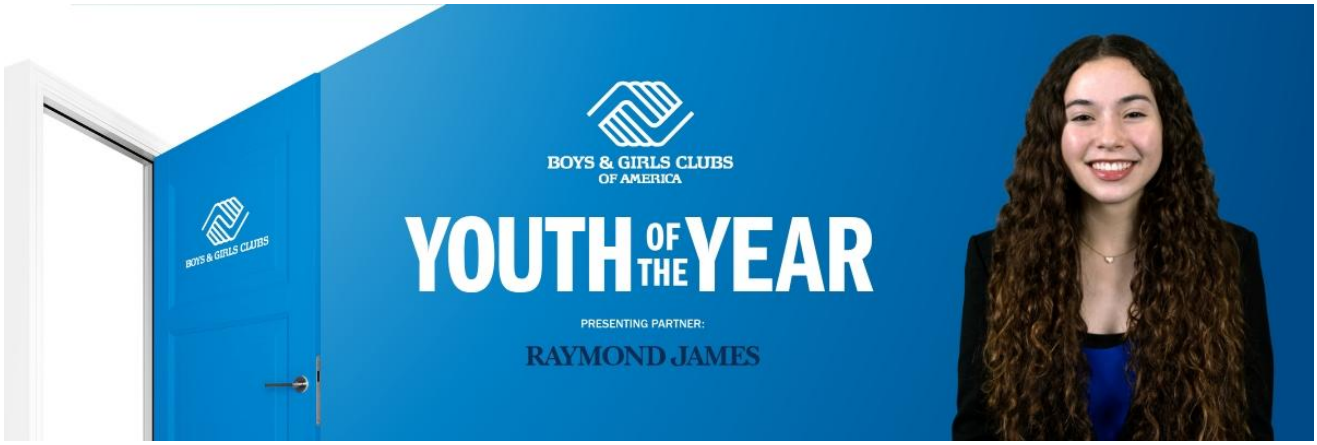


2025-26 National Youth of the Year, Ximena

2027 YOUTH OF THE YEAR APPLICATION KIT

Since 1947, Youth of the Year (YOY) has been Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier recognition program, celebrating Club members' extraordinary achievements. Each year, one exceptional Club member is selected to be the National Youth of the Year. This person serves as an exemplary ambassador for Boys & Girls Club youth and as a strong voice for all of our nation's young people.

The journey to being named National Youth of the Year begins locally and progresses to the state, regional and national levels. To achieve the title of Youth of the Year on any level, Club members must embody the values of leadership and service, academic excellence, healthy lifestyles, and life and workforce readiness. They should exemplify the impact Boys & Girls Clubs have on the lives of young people.

This application kit is designed to be a resource and practice for preparing YOY candidates as they work through the elements of the YOY application. The information contained in this kit will then need to be added to the YOY online application portal for judging at NYOY.org.

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OVERVIEW

The Youth of the Year program creates opportunities for Club youth to receive recognition at the local, state, regional and national levels.

Club Level

A Youth of the Year is selected in the local Club from a pool of members who have participated in a year-round leadership and recognition program. The local Youth of the Year serves as a role model for other young people in the Club and as a representative to the community.

Organizational Level

In multi-unit organizations, only one finalist will be selected from Club-level candidates to represent the entire organization and advance to the state and successive levels.

State Level

Each candidate who advances to a state-level event must submit the application materials in this kit, in their entirety, to BGCA via the online application portal at NYOY.org. This is a one-time submission; materials from this kit will be reproduced for consideration at each successive level, should the candidate move on to regional and/or national participation.

Judges at the state, regional and national levels will consider candidates based on the scoring framework in this kit. For that reason, these application materials require candidates, and those who write letters of recommendation, to make a case for their qualification as BGCA's National Youth of the Year.

Regional Level

Candidates selected at the state level participate in their region's Youth of the Year event. No new application is required for participation at this level.

National Level

The five candidates named Regional Youth of the Year, along with the National Military Youth of the Year, will participate in a judging process to determine the National Youth of the Year.

TOP 5 TIPS FROM XIMENA:

1. **Be Authentically You:** Don't try to become the person you think the judges want to meet. Your experiences, values, and voice are enough. Perfection isn't what inspires people, authenticity is.

2. **Lead by Showing Up:** Leadership isn't always about having the loudest voice or the biggest title. It's about consistently showing up for your Club, your community, and the people who count on you.

3. **Own Your Story:** Every challenge you've faced has shaped who you are. Don't shy away from the difficult chapters, they often reveal your greatest strength and resilience.

4. **Focus on Impact, Not Recognition:** Youth of the Year is about making a difference in the lives of others. Let your passion for serving your community be your motivation, not the award itself.

5. **Believe That You Belong:** Self-doubt is normal, but don't let it convince you that you're not enough. You do not have to have all the answers to make an impact. Trust yourself, embrace every opportunity, and remember that your voice deserves to be heard.

SHARING YOUR STORY

Youth of the Year is an opportunity to share your Club's impact on your life and how the programs, staff, and experiences help shape who you are and your worldview.

Your story is worth sharing and hearing because it is your unique experience. Understanding how you became who you are today is the most essential part of this process.

There is no expectation that you share experiences of trauma or hardship. Powerful stories can emerge from family, culture, identity, service, joy, leadership, growth, community, or any experience meaningful to you.

Your application is not centered around overcoming obstacles, rather, you will use strength-based messaging when you write and speak about your personal and Club experiences. Strengths-based language centers you, your experiences, and the strengths you demonstrate through your experiences and in your community. Strength-based messaging supports positive youth development by allowing your words, stories and imagery to help inspire others to advocate for Boys & Girls Clubs and America's youth.

In your story, consider sharing the values that have shaped you and how the Club has helped you practice those values through leadership and service.

Use your words to paint a picture of how the Club and community has helped develop your strengths, build your confidence, and give you the platform to make a difference in your life and in the lives of others.

As you begin to write and share your story, consider using some of the questions below to help you:

Does my messaging…

- Give an overview of who I am?
- Explain what's important to me and why?
- Show how my Boys & Girls Club experience helped me become a leader in the community?
- Provide an understanding of why I'm positioned to advocate on behalf of America's youth?
- Describe my motivation to advocate for something that I am passionate about?
- Focus on strengths of my community?

We want to learn about what empowered you to be the leader you are today and the issues that you care about. **You should not feel pressured to share anything that you don't want to discuss.** Remember, this is your story and your voice to use as you wish.

Note: While you are encouraged to use your voice, you should only share what you are comfortable sharing publicly.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Restrictions: Candidates named Regional Youth of the Year in prior years are not eligible to participate at the state, regional or national levels. Candidates can be named State Youth of the Year no more than two times. In multi-unit organizations, only one candidate (i.e., the Youth of the Year selected to represent the entire organization) may advance to the state and successive levels. The candidate is required to participate in the state where their organization is chartered with BGCA.

Application: Application submissions will only be accepted online at the YOY online application portal at NYOY.org. Submissions must be received online on or before the due date. Online application submissions may not be altered once submitted.

Age: You must be no younger than 14 and no older than 18 years of age on Jan. 31, 2027, to participate in the judging process at the state level.

Identification: Acceptable forms of identification include: state-issued driver's license or learner's permit, birth certificate, U.S. passport, Social Security card, military ID card, certificate of citizenship and naturalization, employment authorization number and Native American identification card. If you do not have one of these forms of ID, a school ID will be accepted. U.S. citizenship is NOT required.

We recognize that in some instances, your name may not match the name printed on their formal identification. BGCA supports all youth and is committed to providing an affirming and inclusive experience for everyone. You may participate in all Youth of the Year activities, using the name you identify with, regardless of whether it matches the name on your formal ID. BGCA staff will work with you and your advisor on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that all activities are safe and inclusive for everyone.

Status: If you are advancing to the state level you must have been named Youth of the Year for your organization during the current program year (Sept. 1, 2026, to Aug. 31, 2027). The organization's chief executive officer must sign and approve your application.

Attendance: You must have active and continuing membership in a Boys & Girls Club or BGCA-affiliated Youth Center for one year prior to Jan. 31, 2027. Membership must be consecutive and may include more than one Club or organization.

Participation in state, regional, and national YOY events will require in-person attendance. If there is an extenuating circumstance that will prevent in-person attendance, BGCA will work with local Club staff to help accommodate the candidate when possible.

Note: To ensure fidelity of the YOY program, BGCA may in the future return to the pre-COVID attendance eligibility of at least 2 years of active and continuing membership.

Travel: Participation in state, regional, and national YOY events will involve travel, with a preference for air travel. This may include travel to events, partner meetings, or conferences. Air travel to YOY events will require a **REAL ID** (marked with a star) or a **passport**. International YOY applicants on military installations must have a valid U.S. passport, a visa or electronic travel authorization if required by your destination, and a return ticket. If air travel is not feasible, BGCA will work with local Club staff to arrange alternate travel to BGCA-sponsored events.

Alumni Enrollment: All juniors or seniors in high school must register for the Alumni & Friends Club at BGCA.org/Alumni. (Be sure to select the Club you attend when registering.)

Note: We recognize and support YOY candidates with disabilities. Please notify BGCA of any accommodation needs so we can assist accordingly. Each situation will be reviewed individually.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Who completes the application?

You should identify a trusted adult partner who can support you throughout the application process. You should ensure all application materials are complete, professional looking and well-assembled. Your YOY advisor or Club staff will assist with getting this information into the YOY online application portal at NYOY.org

How/when are applications submitted?

Application deadlines and event dates are determined by each state's host organization. When event dates are final, they are listed in the Youth of the Year application portal at NYOY.org and the YOY page at BGCA.net/page/YOY. . Applications should be completed in the YOY portal at least 30 days prior to the event date.

When completing the application in the YOY portal, you will use this YOY application kit as your guide as you enter your information, essays and upload the resume, cover letter, letters of recommendation and required forms. All application materials are outlined on the checklist (page 8).

Please remember: Only complete applications received by the application deadline will be reviewed and available to the judges for consideration.

What happens after submission?

After the deadline, all complete and approved applications will be reviewed by the judges in the YOY online application portal.

During the judging process, the application packet will be considered along with the overall application quality, speeches and interviews at the event.

SCORING FRAMEWORK

The four weighted categories below will inform the judging process on the state, regional and national levels. Additional instructions for creating the best possible application are found throughout this document. Please reference the individual forms and sections for guidance. Advisors, the Youth of the Year Leadership Development Suite (BGCA.net/page/YOY) includes YOY getting ready activities for each category.

You should consider identifying a platform you are passionate about that contributes to the well-being of youth in Clubs and Youth Centers. This messaging should remain consistent throughout your speech and essays. You are encouraged to highlight the many ways leadership and advocacy can be demonstrated, including relationship-building, caregiving, creativity, peer support, cultural leadership, community engagement, and efforts to create systems change. Your message should reflect their character, commitment to service, and the positive impact you have made within your Club or Youth Center and the broader community.

Category	Description	Weight
Candidate Essays	You must write essays about: 1. My Club Experience 2. What Matters to Me 3. Personal Growth The essays will be judged for content, clarity and overall quality.	25%
Interview	You should prepare for a 15-minute personal interview with a panel of judges. Judges will take turns asking the same set of questions, but follow-up questions may vary.	25%
Public Speaking	You should be prepared to deliver a speech based on the content of your three essays. Speeches may be no longer than three minutes. You are strictly prohibited from using any notes or electronic devices at the state, regional and national levels unless the device is needed to accommodate a disability. You are also prohibited from using props and/or costumes. You will be judged on speech content, delivery, stage presence and poise.	25%
Overall Application Quality	Judges will assess each application – including the cover letter, resume and letters of recommendation – for clarity, professionalism, completion of each section and quality of supplemental materials. For example, you will provide two letters of recommendation from individuals who can personally attest to your leadership and potential. These are: 1. Club Recommendation 2. Community Recommendation	25%

YOY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A Youth of the Year candidate embodies excellence in Boys & Girls Clubs of America's four priority outcome areas of Health & Well-Being, Character & Leadership, Academic Success, and Life & Workforce Readiness. Being named Youth of the Year is the highest honor bestowed upon Club members. The National Youth of the Year serves as a role model and spokesperson for America's youth. They educate millions of Americans about the power of the Club experience and elevate the national focus on key issues facing children and teens.

Under the direction of BGCA staff, Youth of the Year representatives will attend state, regional and national events. They will serve as thought leaders on key issues by telling their inspiring personal stories. Potential audiences include youth, alumni, members of the media, and political, corporate and community leaders. Youth of the Year representatives may be asked to appear on television, make remarks before public officials and speak at events where they can make a difference. State, regional and national YOYs will serve in this role for one year.

Commitments

The primary commitments include, but are not limited to, the following:

Public Speaking: you will deliver speeches – without the use of props, notes or other memory aids – at a variety of events. You will keep speeches updated in an electronic format and if requested, submit them to BGCA staff prior to events. BGCA staff will work with you and your advisor to ensure an inclusive space for everyone.

Event Participation: you will attend BGCA-sponsored events. You may be asked to make remarks, answer questions, and engage guests in conversation. You must strive to remain responsive, punctual, courteous, and gracious. State Youth of the Year are expected to participate in the Regional Youth of the Year event during the year they are named State Youth of the Year. Regional Youth of the Year must participate in the National Youth of the Year event during the year they are named Regional Youth of the Year.

Academic Achievement: you must have a strong commitment to academic achievement and improvement throughout the year in which you hold the YOY title. State, Regional and National YOYs must maintain a 2.5 GPA to utilize your scholarships.

Leadership

You demonstrate leadership skills in your interactions with others and in your communities. You create meaningful change and motivate and inspire others.

Self-Leadership: you demonstrate self-awareness and understanding of personal values. You set goals and take action aligned with your personal values. You make choices that positively impact your lifeand you inspire others.

Leadership With Others: you understand the value of different perspectives. You use effective and inclusive communication practices to work together toward a shared goal and collaborate by including diverse perspectives.

Leadership in the Community: you continuously seek to understand community needs. You listen to and engage with people with diverse perspectives. You use self-knowledge and collaboration to make transformative change in communities.

Qualifications

Youth Advocacy: you should be able to speak up and/or take action for yourself and/or others to support a cause or purpose you believe in.

Knowledge of Boys & Girls Club Movement Priorities: you should have at least basic knowledge about current BGCA programming and events. You should be able to speak clearly about your Club Experience and the vital role the Club plays in providing opportunities for youth in your community. You should be committed to leveraging the coaching and support of BGCA staff to become stronger in this area.

Communication: Effective leadership communication can take many forms and styles**.** You should possess strong verbal and written communication skills. You should be able to articulate the impact your Club Experience has had on your life. You should feel comfortable and confident delivering prepared speeches and answering spontaneous questions. You should also demonstrate strong listening skills by listening with understanding when others are speaking and thoughtfully answering questions. Youth with disabilities can be supported in achieving these outcomes through reasonable accommodation.

Relational Ability: you should demonstrate a high degree of relational ability and cultural humility by being able to appreciate diverse backgrounds and cultures, see the world from multiple perspectives and understand the value of these differences. You should be inclusive and able to effectively communicate and build relationships with others.

Character: you are an ambassador for the Movement and youth around the world. You must emulate the highest standards of character, including trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring. Character and leadership development occur over time and Youth of the Year recognizes growth, reflection, and learning in addition to demonstrated strengths.

Trustworthiness: is being able to be relied upon as honest or truthful.

Respect: involves treating others with honor, accepting differences, being courteous to others, and considering others' feelings.

Responsibility: Is recognizing how behaviors affect others in both positive and negative ways and being accountable for your words and actions.

Fairness: means following the rules, taking turns, sharing, being open-minded, listening to others, and treating others equally and with respect.

Caring:. is about understanding, compassion for the experiences, perspectives of others, demonstrating kindness, showing empathy, gratitude, and forgiveness.

Citizenship: involves understanding community issues and dynamics and collaborating to find a solution to shared problems.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Applications must include each item noted below that will become what is added into the YOY online application portal at NYOY.org. Check off each item on this page as you complete them.

Note: Once applications are submitted, they cannot be altered!

☐ **Candidate Nomination Form**
Includes information about the candidate and organization.

☐ **Resume and Cover Letter**
Review the resume and cover letter instructions and available templates in this kit to prepare. Please do not include personal identifying information (e.g., home address, email, phone number) in the resume or cover letter. The resume and cover letter will be uploaded into the YOY online application portal.

☐ **Essays**
Essay instructions are included in this kit. We recommend that you compose your essays in a Word document so that you can /paste your essays into the YOY online application portal. The three required essays are:

1. My Club Experience
2. What Matters to Me
3. Personal Growth

☐ **Letters of Recommendation**
Instructions are included in this kit. The two required letters of recommendation that will be uploaded into the YOY online application portal are:

1. Club Recommendation
2. Community Recommendation

☐ **Photocopy of ID**
A copy of your ID will be uploaded into the YOY online application portal and can be one of the following forms of identification: state- issued driver's license or learner's permit, birth certificate, U.S. passport, Social Security card, military ID card, certificate of citizenship and naturalization, employment authorization number or Native American identification card. If you do not have one of these forms of ID, a school ID will be accepted. U.S. citizenship is NOT required.

We recognize that in some instances, your name may not match the name printed on your formal identification. BGCA supports all youth and is committed to providing an affirming and inclusive experience for everyone. You will be able to participate in all Youth of the Year activities, using the name you identify with, regardless of whether it matches the name on your ID. BGCA Staff will work to ensure that all activities remain a safe and inclusive space for everyone. Please note that demographic information is collected to support inclusivity and representation and is not used to evaluate candidate qualifications.

☐ **Headshot**
Your headshot must be a professional, high-resolution (300 dpi or 3.5 MB) headshot in front of a solid color wall or backdrop and dressed in business or campus casual attire. A school photo is a great example. The headshot will be uploaded to the YOY online application portal and will be used for event collateral.

☐ **Alumni & Friends Enrollment – Juniors & Seniors**
All candidates who are juniors or seniors in high school must register for the Alumni & Friends Club at BGCA.org/alumni. (Be sure to select your Club when registering.) This form found in this kit will be uploaded into the YOY online application portal.

☐ **Required Signed Forms**
Fully complete and sign all forms found in this kit. Upload them to the YOY online application portal.

1. Emergency Care Release
2. Authorization
3. General Waiver
4. Alumni & Friends Club Enrollment
5. Code of Conduct
6. YOY Essay Integrity Statement

Application Component	Who Can Help?
Candidate Nomination Form	YOY Advisor, Club staff
Resume	Advisor, school counselor, teacher, mentor, employer
Cover Letter	Advisor, English teacher, mentor
Essays	Advisor, English teacher, trusted mentor, parent/guardian (for feedback only)
Club Recommendation	Club professional
Community Recommendation	Coach, teacher, employer, faith leader, volunteer supervisor, community leader
Headshot	Club staff, parent/guardian, photographer
Required Forms	Parent/guardian, advisor, CEO

CANDIDATE NOMINATION FORM

Candidate Information	
First Name & Last Name	
Full Name as on Government ID	
Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)	How would you like to describe yourself? ☐Female ☐Male ☐Identifies another way—please share below
What is your race/ethnicity? (Select all that apply.) ☐American Indian or Alaska Native ☐Asian ☐Black or African American ☐Hispanic or Latino ☐Middle Eastern or North African Native ☐Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ☐White ☐Not listed – please share below	
Address including house number, street name, apt. number, APO/FFO/MPO	
City, State/Province, Zip Code, Country	
Email Address	
High School Name	
Anticipated Date of High School Graduation	GPA GPA

Anticipated College/University/Institute/Trade School	
Anticipated Career Choice	
Length of Club Membership (in Years)	T-Shirt Size

Organization Information

Name of Boys & Girls Club Organization		Name of Unit/Extension
Street Address		Line 2 (apt, suite, etc.)
City, State and Zip Code		Phone Number
Name of Chief Executive Officer	Telephone Number	Email Address
Name of YOY Advisor/Staff Contact	Telephone Number	Email Address

Candidate Bio

List two words that describe your defining characteristics (e.g., kind, ambitious).

Write a short personal statement that expresses, in your own words, what your Club has meant to you, or something about another topic that is close to your heart.

Example: *"My Club is where I found a place to belong, a place to lead, and a place to create change. It is the place I'm forever thankful to call my second home." - Ximena*

RESUME INSTRUCTIONS

Use these instructions, sample resume and resume template to create a resume that shows your qualifications for the role of National Youth of the Year. Upload your resume to the YOY online application portal. Note: Please do not include personal identifying information (e.g., home address, email or phone number) in your resume. Using this template is not mandatory; it is provided as an example. If you choose to use the template, be sure to thoroughly review your content spacing.

The resume is your most important tool when applying for a job. It is a marketing device and acts as your first impression on paper, so take your time to construct it well. Your resume needs to highlight how you meet the necessary:

- Job requirements
- Qualifications and education
- Experience and skills
- Professionalism for the job

Always tailor your resume to any job for which you apply. In this case, please complete the Youth of the Year Candidate Resume Template with your goal to be Youth of the Year in mind.

Resume Introduction

As a Youth of the Year candidate, your goal is to serve as a leader and representative of Boys & Girls Clubs of America and youth across the country. Your resume should include specific characteristics that you believe define your leadership philosophy.

Review the following leadership characteristics and select the three that best represent your leadership style, or you may also come up with your own.

- **Problem Solver:** When I notice a problem or challenge, I look for and suggest possible solutions.
- **Mentor:** I provide guidance and support and am a role model for others.
- **Advocate:** I speak up for myself and/or others to support a cause or purpose I believe in.
- **Project Leader:** I lead myself and/or others to complete a project.
- **Evaluator:** I take the time to reflect and gather information before and after making a decision.
- **Collaborator:** I work respectfully with peers and adults to share responsibilities and accomplish goals.
- **Convener:** I bring people together who have different ideas and experiences to accomplish a purpose.
- **Creative Thinker:** I think of new and innovative ideas.
- **Effective Speaker:** I confidently and clearly express thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- **Effective Listener:** I listen without judging, assuming or interrupting.
- **Decision Maker:** I can make and express a decision that moves work or ideas forward, even if it might be an unpopular one.
- **Continuous Learner:** I continuously look for opportunities to learn about myself, others, and the world around me.
- **Self-Motivator:** I believe in and encourage myself to keep going when faced with a challenge.
- **Motivator of Others:** I encourage others to believe in themselves and keep going when faced with a challenge.
- **Initiator:** I am a self-starter who takes action when I see a need.
- **Time Manager:** I effectively manage time to accomplish goals.
- **Community Builder:** I help others feel safe, included and connected to each other.
- **Inspirer:** I spark interest, excitement and action in others.
- **Coordinator:** I can responsibly manage resources and organize and plan activities.
- **Visionary:** I have and can share a vision for a brighter future and/or outcome.

After you have selected your three leadership characteristics, incorporate these into the Youth of the Year Candidate Resume Template.

Professional Experience

When providing your professional experience, start by listing your most recent leadership experience first and work backward from there. Give the position titles you held and the dates you worked in each position.

Your examples should demonstrate your experience as a leader. These might include:

- **Leadership roles you've held at the Club** (e.g., Keystone President)
- **Leadership roles you've held in school** (e.g., Assistant Coach for Swim Team)
- **Employment, internships or volunteer work you've done** (e.g., Coordinator for Community Food Drive)

For each leadership role you include, list up to three responsibilities you had while in that role and significant contributions you made. Make sure these responsibilities and contributions match the leadership characteristics you selected earlier on your resume. If you had more than three responsibilities and contributions, choose the three that best represent your leadership characteristics.

Awards

Highlighting specific awards or recognition you received is another way to show your leadership capabilities and qualifications. These may include awards you received in the Club, your school or through your community engagement and service.

Certifications

Highlight specific certifications you have earned to emphasize your leadership capabilities and qualifications to hold the role of Youth of the Year. These could be certifications you earned in the Club, your school or through your community engagement and service.

Education

Lastly, please detail where you are in your education. This includes your current grade level, your current GPA, and your projected graduation date.

RESUME

First & Last Name

Youth of the Year Candidate Resume

The three leadership characteristics that best describe me are:

1. Leadership Characteristic 1
2. Leadership Characteristic 2
3. Leadership Characteristic 3

Professional Experience

Starting from the most recent, detail up to three leadership roles you held and the dates you held those positions. Then under each leadership role, bullet three responsibilities you achieved.

Company Name	Date Range

Company Name	Date Range

- Responsibility 1
- Responsibility 2
- Responsibility 3

Company Name	Date Range

- Responsibility 1
- Responsibility 2
- Responsibility 3

Awards

If you have received awards or recognition, please add up to three below.

Award	Presenting Organization	Reason for Award	Date Awarded
Award 1	Organization Name	Reason	Date
Award 2	Organization Name	Reason	Date
Award 3	Organization Name	Reason	Date

Certifications

If you have received any certifications, please add up to three below.

Certification	Presenting Organization	Date Certified
Certification 1	Organization	Date
Certification 2	Organization	Date
Certification 3	Organization	Date

Education

Please list your current grade level, your GPA and projected graduation date.

Current Grade Level	GPA	Graduation Date
Grade Level	GPA	Date

COVER LETTER INSTRUCTIONS

A cover letter is a single-page letter you include with your resume when applying for a job. When writing a cover letter, you should:

- Introduce yourself
- Mention the role you're applying for, in this case, National Youth of the Year
- Show how your skills and experiences match those needed to do the job
- Conclude with a thank you

The following instructions will help you build your Youth of the Year cover letter to accompany your resume. Have a copy of your Youth of the Year resume with you when you complete the cover letter and reference the experience you detailed there.

Note: Please do not include personal identifying information (e.g., home address, email, phone number) in the cover letter.

It is not mandatory to use the template, but it provides an example to follow. If you choose to use the template, be sure to thoroughly review your content spacing.

Opening:

- Hello, my name is...
- I am applying for the role of National Youth of the Year.
- I believe I can represent the youth of America by... (use 10 words or fewer).

Prompt 1: The impact I will make as National Youth of the Year… (use 150 words or fewer).

Prompt 2: The three leadership characteristics I selected on my resume will help prepare me to make an impact as Youth of the Year… (use 150 words or fewer).

- Leadership Characteristic 1: Example of what I did.
- Leadership Characteristic 2: Example of what I did.
- Leadership Characteristic 3: Example of what I did.

Prompt 3: My professional experience helps prepare me to make that impact as Youth of the Year… (use 150 words or fewer).

Closing:

- Thank you for considering me for the role of National Youth of the Year.
- I appreciate the opportunity to... (use 10 words or fewer).

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Nadia E. LaCosta

January 7, 2027

To Whom It May Concern:

Hello, my name is Nadia E. LaCosta. I am applying for the role of National Youth of the Year. I believe I can represent the youth of America by serving as a continuous learner who can represent diverse perspectives.

The impact I will make as National Youth of the Year will be through listening to the needs of youth and using my voice and platform to find ways to give them a voice.

My generation has the potential and ability to overcome the challenges America is facing. Many youth are being raised in single-parent households with busy parents, which can impact their access to opportunities to connect with adult mentors. Growing up in a single-parent household myself, I know that not having a second parent to go to for support, comfort and guidance can make simple things difficult. Youth depression and suicide rates are at an all-time high in America, making strong mentors and mentorship programs extremely important. I believe everyone should have access to a mentor. As Youth of the Year, I will advocate for positive ways to make this happen within Clubs, schools and communities.

The three leadership characteristics I selected on my resume will help prepare me to make an impact as Youth of the Year.

- **Project Leader:** My leadership role of Keystone president has allowed me to lead important projects that support youth in my Club and community. Knowing how to manage projects that impact others will help me set real goals and expectations in projects I take on as Youth of the Year.

- **Convener:** Listening to the needs of other youth is an important part in making positive change for others. I will use my strength as a convener to reach out and understand different perspectives so I can advocate for change that benefits more people.

- **Continuous Learner:** I believe reflection and self-improvement are important parts of leadership. I will plan times to connect with mentors in my life to reflect and help me grow as a leader.

My professional experience helps prepare me to make that impact as Youth of the Year. As Keystone president, I had to listen to and represent the needs of my Keystone Club to staff and members of my community. I also learned skills to help me be a better mentor to other youth through my role as assistant coach on my swim team. Lastly, working to plan my community food drive gave me experience collaborating with important leaders outside of my Club to make a greater change for our community.

Thank you for considering me for the role of National Youth of the Year. I appreciate the opportunity to share my passion and experiences with you.

Sincerely,

Nadia E. LaCosta

COVER LETTER

First & Last Name

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

Hello, my name is . I am applying for the role of National Youth of the Year. I believe I can represent the youth of America by … (use 10 words or less).

The impact I will make as National Youth of the Year … (use 150 words or less).

The three leadership characteristics I selected on my resume will help prepare me to make an impact as Youth of the Year…(use 150 words or less).

My professional experience helps prepare me to make that impact as Youth of the Year …(use 150 words or less).

Thank you for considering me for the role of National Youth of the Year. I appreciate the opportunity to … (use 10 words or less).

Sincerely,

ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

Please use these instructions to help develop your essays. Allow each of the questions and prompts to guide you. Your essays will be judged on content, writing style, clarity and grammar. Work with staff members at your Club to make sure essays are well written and compelling. Together, you can access the YOY Getting Ready Activities found in the YOY Leadership Development Suite as a resource at **BGCA.net/page/YOY**

Once your drafts are complete, copy/paste your final copy directly into the YOY online application portal. Each essay has a limit of 5,000 characters, including spaces. (This is roughly the equivalent of a two-page document typed in 11-point Times New Roman font with 1.5 line spacing.)

Essay 1: My Club Experience

Explain why you come to the Club and how it has impacted your life.

Consider the following prompts:

- Describe the skills you have developed and strengthened (e.g., self-awareness, communication, goal setting).
- Describe activities you have participated in or roles you filled.
- Describe a supportive relationship with a peer or adult at the Club.
- Describe examples of your participation in Club community engagement efforts (e.g., campaigns, presentations, service-learning projects).

Essay 2: What Matters to Me

A great foundation for leadership begins with identifying interests, passions and issues that are important to you. Actions and daily practices shaped by these things help you to be an advocate in your Club or community. For example, if you are passionate about the environment, you practice and advocate for recycling in your Club or home.

Consider the following prompts:

- What sparks your interest or passion?
- What is an issue that is important to you?
- Describe an interest or passion that you have put into action or plan to put into action in the future.

Essay 3: Personal Growth

This topic is taken directly from the Common Application essay prompts. The Common Application is a platform used by many colleges. Take extra care when drafting this section, as you may be able to use it again when applying to the colleges and universities of your choice.

Discuss an accomplishment, event or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

Consider the following prompts:

- Highlight some of the strengths you possess that helped you in your journey.
- What did you learn?
- Why is it important to develop an understanding of others?

Note: To maintain fairness and authenticity, you must submit essays that are entirely your own work. The use of generative AI tools, including ChatGPT and similar platforms, to create, edit, rewrite, or enhance essays is prohibited and may result in disqualification.

RECOMMENDATION INSTRUCTIONS

As a Youth of the Year candidate, you must request two letters of recommendation to affirm your leadership experiences and abilities. One letter needs to be from a person in the Club, and the second should be from someone in the community.

The National Youth of the Year is primarily selected based on their leadership experiences and commitment to community service. The purpose of these letters of recommendation is to clarify how you exemplify these qualities. Ask caring adults who can directly comment on your experiences and abilities to write their recommendations. Please include contact information for each letter writer. Once letters are completed, scan and submit them through the online portal as attachments.

Recommendation 1

Club Recommendation

This letter should be written by a Club professional. Please ask the person you select to print their letter on Club/Organization letterhead. Also ask the letter writer to include their signature, title and email address. Forward the following instructions to help them draft their letter.

Instructions: Please discuss the candidate's suitability to hold the title of National Youth of the Year. Consider the following prompts:

- Commitment to leadership, character and community service
- Values, interests and goals

Experiences as a leader and team member within the Club community.
Please include examples that highlight the candidate's potential for future leadership success.

Recommendation 2

Community Recommendation

This letter should be written by an adult member of your community (not a family member or Club staff) who can describe your positive actions in the community and how you demonstrate leadership skills and other abilities. Please ask the person you select to print their letter on official letterhead, as appropriate, and to include their signature, title, email address and physical address. Also forward the following background and instructions to help them draft their letter.

Background: What is Youth of the Year?
Since 1947, Youth of the Year has been Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier recognition program, celebrating Club members' extraordinary achievements. Each year, one exceptional Club member is selected to be the National Youth of the Year. This person serves as an exemplary ambassador for Boys & Girls Club youth and as a strong voice for all of our nation's young people.

Instructions: Please discuss the candidate's suitability to hold the National Youth of the Year title. Consider the following prompts:

- Values, interests and goals
- Experiences as a leader and team member within the community
- Personal accomplishments and achievements, and the skills they have demonstrated to do this
- The impact the Boys & Girls Club has had on you.

Please include examples that highlight the candidate's potential for future leadership success.

EMERGENCY CARE RELEASE

*Please give this form to your parent or guardian to fill out and sign. Then return it to the Club professional assigned to assist you, who will complete the bottom portion.**

Candidate's Full Name (First, MI, Last)		
Family Physician's Name	Physician's Telephone	Date of Last DPT or Tetanus Shot (MM/DD/YYYY) (if known)
Is your child currently taking any medications? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please list name(s) of medications.		
Does your child have any other allergies? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please list.		
Does your child have any dietary restrictions? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe.		
Name of Insurance Company (Note: Health insurance is not required to participate; for information only)		
Policy Number	Member Number	Expiration Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Parent/Legal Guardian Full Name (First, MI, Last)		Telephone Number
Parent/Legal Guardian Email Address		

In the event of an emergency at which time I cannot be reached, I give consent to transport my child by ambulance to a medical facility for treatment, and I will take full responsibility for this action and agree to pay any expenses incurred for this transportation and treatment. I hereby give my consent to any emergency facility and physician to administer medical treatment to my child_____(child's name), according to the physician or facility's discretion.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature:_____Date: _____

BOTTOM PORTION MUST BE COMPLETED BY A CLUB PROFESSIONAL

Organization Verification

As a person with authority on behalf of my Boys & Girls Club organization, the foregoing instrument was

Acknowledged before me on the_____day of_____,

20_____by_____(parent or legal guardian) who is personally known to me or who

has produced_____as identification.

Organization Representative Signature:_____Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

**Required for all candidates, even for those 18 and older.*

AUTHORIZATION

Please give this form to your parent or guardian to fill out and sign. Then return it to the Club professional assigned to assist you.

By signing this form, candidates and their parent(s)/guardian(s) acknowledge they have completed the application in full, including supporting documents; they have read and understand the requirements of the National Youth of the Year job description and qualifications; and they have been truthful and honest when completing all forms. Parent/guardian signature indicates that they have agreed to the below on behalf of themselves and the candidate.

CANDIDATE HAS READ AND AGREE TO CARRY OUT THE STATED QUALIFICATIONS, REQUIREMENTS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH OF THE YEAR. CANDIDATE UNDERSTANDS THAT FAILURE TO MEET ANY OF THESE COULD DISQUALIFY THEM FROM THE PROCESS OR RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE YOUTH OF THE YEAR TITLE AT THE STATE, REGIONAL OR NATIONAL LEVEL AND SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS AFFILIATED WITH YOUTH OF THE YEAR.

Candidate understands that all YOY candidates may be subject to a background check and is aware that details of my personal life and/or my family circumstances may become public knowledge.

Candidate understands that the requirements outlined in the YOY Job Description, including those pertaining to character and integrity, are critical to the integrity of the program and that failure to meet the requirements could harm the program. Candidate recognizes BGCA is the sole determiner of whether candidate has failed to meet those requirements, and in such case, candidate agrees to forfeit all rights and privileges associated with participation in the YOY program, including any scholarship(s) dollars received as a part of the YOY program. Candidate further understands actions that would result in a revocation of the YOY title and scholarship include, but are not limited to: arrest, unlawful behavior, and/or acts of dishonesty.

Candidate Signature:_____Date: _____

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) Signature_____Date: _____

I have read the National Youth of the Year Job Description, understand the duties that will be required of me, and acknowledge failure to meet these requirements may result in me being asked to step down as Youth of the Year and in forfeiture of scholarship dollars associated with Youth of the Year.

Candidate Signature:_____Date: _____

GENERAL WAIVER

Please give this form to your parent or guardian to review and sign. Then return it to the Chief Executive Officer to complete the bottom portion.

It is expressly understood and agreed that Boys & Girls Clubs of America and its affiliates, member organizations, sponsors, staff, volunteers, legal representatives, successors and assigns shall not be responsible or legally liable for any losses, including those of personal property, or for any bodily injuries or the results thereof, incurred and suffered by the candidate in connection with the candidate's participation in the Youth of Year program, including travel in connection therewith.

Candidate Signature:_____Date: _____

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) Signature:_____Date: _____

Candidate Acknowledgement: I hereby consent to print and online publication and use of photographs and information contained in this application – and photos and videos taken of me during the entire Youth of the Year process from local to national – by Boys & Girls Clubs of America, local affiliates, donors or its agents, and I agree that I will not receive any compensation for same. I hereby attest that all information contained in this application form and attached supporting materials is, to the best of my knowledge, truthful, accurate and complete, and that I meet all eligibility requirements of the Youth of the Year program. I attest that the essays contained in this application are my original work and represent, to the best of my ability, my own thoughts on the questions put forth.

Candidate Signature:_____Date: _____

I (we) have received a copy of the application form being submitted on behalf of _____ (candidate) as a nominee for Youth of the Year. I (we) have reviewed this application in its entirety for accuracy and completeness, and I (we) certify all information contained in the nomination form is accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge. I (we) affirm that I (we) have been given an opportunity by the Club to correct any misinformation to ensure the accuracy of the application. I (we) consent to allow any information in this application to be made public through any media as determined by_____(local Club organization) or by Boys & Girls Clubs of America. I (we) hereby consent to print and online publication and use of photographs and information contained in this application form – and photos and video taken of the candidate during the entire Youth of the Year process from local to national – by Boys & Girls Clubs of America, local affiliates, donors or its agents, and that neither the candidate nor I (we) will receive compensation for such publication. By signing this application, I (we) hereby waive any claims associated with this program against Boys & Girls Clubs of America and its member organizations.

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) Signature:_____Date: _____

BOTTOM PORTION TO BE COMPLETED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I hereby attest all information contained in this application form and attached supporting materials is, to the best of my knowledge, truthful, accurate and complete, and that the candidate meets all eligibility requirements of the Youth of the Year program. I certify a copy of this application was given to the parents/guardians of the candidate, and they have been given an opportunity to make any corrections/additions to the application to ensure its accuracy.

Chief Executive Officer Signature:_____Date: _____

ALUMNI & FRIENDS CLUB
ENROLLMENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT
JUNIORS AND SENIORS ONLY

Once you have enrolled in the Alumni & Friends Club at BGCA.org, please sign and date this document. Then return it to the Club professional assigned to assist you. All candidates who are juniors or seniors in high school must register for the Alumni & Friends Club.

I have enrolled in BGCA's Alumni & Friends Club.

Candidate Signature:_____ Date: _____

CODE OF CONDUCT

Please review with your Club staff advisor. This code of conduct should be signed by you, your parent/guardian, your Club staff advisor and shared with the Club CEO.

- You must show courtesy and respect at all times.
- You must follow instructions and behave respectfully toward others, your advisor, any other Club professional or any BGCA staff member who addresses you.
- You must attend all events and remain in events from beginning to end, unless otherwise directed.
- You must always dress appropriately, as requested by BGCA. Please refer to dress code guidelines at BGCA.net/page/YOY.
- You may not use props, notes or memory aids (electronic or physical) unless the device is needed to accommodate a disability.
- If your advisor wants to meet with you and/or practice your speech, the meeting must take place in a public space.
- Your speeches are not permitted to be recorded during judging events.
- You must be in your hotel room by 10 p.m., unless otherwise announced. Once in your room, you must keep noise levels low to respect other hotel guests.
- You must maintain a reasonable and moderate noise level at all times. Music is permitted only in the sleeping rooms, and the volume must be set at a low level.
- Visitation by fellow Youth of the Year and/or advisors is strictly prohibited in hotel rooms. All interactions outside of scheduled events must be in common areas with advisor approval. Failure to comply will lead to an early return home and disqualification.
- Absolutely no drugs, tobacco, vaping, alcohol or sexual activity will be tolerated.
- Loitering outside of the hotel is strictly prohibited.
- In cases of serious misconduct or repeated misbehavior, you will be asked to leave and will be removed from the event. If this happens, it is the responsibility of the advisor to arrange for the candidate to return home safely.
- Failing to maintain these standards could lead to being asked to relinquish your title and forfeit any scholarship dollars related to the YOY program.

NOTE: You will be treated with courtesy, respect, and kindness throughout all Youth of the Year experiences by BGCA staff, advisors, volunteers, judges, partners, and other participants. If you have a concern about how you are being treated, you should notify your advisor or a member of the BGCA Youth of the Year team on site as soon as possible so the concern can be addressed promptly.

Print Name of Club Professional:_____ Date: _____

Club Professional Signature: _____

Print Name of Youth of the Year Candidate:_____ Date: _____

Youth of the Year Candidate Signature: _____

Print Name of Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):_____ Date: _____

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) Signature:_____

YOUTH OF THE YEAR ESSAY INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Please review with your Club staff advisor. This should be signed by you, your Club staff advisor and your Club CEO.

To ensure fairness and authenticity, Youth of the Year participants are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT or similar platforms) to draft, edit, or otherwise create their essays. Essays must reflect each member's original ideas, experiences, and writing.

Use of AI-assisted tools for content generation, editing, or rewriting is considered a violation of program integrity and may result in disqualification.

By signing below, the Youth of the Year, Advisor, and Chief Executive Officer affirm that the Youth of the Year essays submitted are the member's own original work and have not been created or modified using generative AI tools.

Print Name ofAdvisor:_____Date: _____

AdvisorSignature: _____

Print Name of Youth of the Year Candidate:_____Date: _____

Youth of the Year Candidate Signature: _____

Print Name of CEO:_____Date: _____

CEO Signature:_____